

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 05847 050913Z
ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4803
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION BERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 5847

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, RO

SUBJECT: JIU VALLEY COAL MINERS RESTIVE?

1. SUMMARY. RUMORS OF STRIKE BY JIU VALLEY COAL MINERS COUPLED
WITH SUDDEN CEAUSESCU VISIT TO AREA LEAD US TO BELIEVE SOME KIND
OF IDABOR UNREST EXISTS IN AREA, PROBABLY OVER ECONOMIC ISSUES.
END SUMMARY.

2. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING IN BUCHAREST THAT A STRIKE STARTED

SEVERAL DAYS AGO AMONG COAL MINERS IN JIU VALLEY IN WESTERN
ROMANIA, SCENE OF SOME OCCASIONAL LABOR UNREST IN PAST YEARS
(E.G. SEPTEMBER 1972). NO CAUSE GIVEN, AND WE HAVE NOT YET
BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM EXISTENCE OF STRIKE OR OTHER PROBLEM.
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PAGE 02 BUCAR 05847 050913Z

3. ON AUGUST 3, HOWEVER, CEAUSESCU INTERRUPTED HIS BLACK
SEA VACATION TO MAKE A "WORKING VISIT" TO THE AREA ACCOMPANIED

BY PARTY SECRETARY VERDET (ORGANIZATION), DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER OPREA, MINISTER OF LABOR AND TRADES UNION CHIEF
PANA AND MINISTER OF MINES, PETROLEUM AND GEOLOGY BABALAU.

ACCORDING TO AUGUST 4 SCINTEIA, IN A MEETING WITH MINERS' REPRESENTATIVES FROM LUPENI COAL MINE, PRESIDENT WAS TOLD OF "DIFFICULTIES" IN THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK, "ABUSES" IN APPLICATION OF LAWS, AND "DEFICIENCIES" OF MINE MANAGEMENT. IN REPLY, HE EXPLAINED PARTY AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON IMPROVING STANDARDS OF LIVING, THEN "STRONGLY CRITICIZED" MANAGEMENT OF SOME MINES AND LOCAL PARTRU AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ORDERED "ENERGETIC MEASURES" TO RECTIFY SITUATION. SCINTEIA NOTES THAT IN TALK WITH MINERS CEAUSESCU LAID PARTICULAR STRESS ON WORKER DISCIPLINE AND IMPORTANCE OF COAL PRODUCTION TO ROMANIA'S ENERGY NEEDS.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT PUBLIC MEETING AT PETROSANI, PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY DWELT AGAIN ON RECENT SALARY AND PENSION LAWS IN ORDER TO CLEAR UP "MISUNDERSTANDINGS" CAUSED BY FAILURE OF LOCAL PARTY AND STATE BODIES TO EXPLAIN ADEQUATELY. CURIOUSLY, SCINTEIA PRINTED ONLY EXCERPTS OF SPEECH AND NOT FULL TEXT AS USUAL. CEAUSESCU PROMISED AN IMPROVEMENT IN SUCH "SOCIAL SERVICES" (I.E. FRINGE BENEFITS) AS MEDICAL CARE AND REEMPHASIZED NEED TO STRENGTHEN "WORKERS DEMOCRACY" IN THE VALLEY. AT ONE POINT, HE REMINDED THE AUDIENCE, WHICH WOULD HAVE INCLUDED A LARGE NUMBER OF MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, THAT IF THEY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH A MINE MANAGER THEY CAN REQUEST THE MINISTRY TO REMOVE HIM AND THAT THE MINISTRY MUST ACT WITHIN 15 DAYS. HE ASSURED MINERS THAT THEY COULD WORK AS LONG AS THEY LIKE AND WILL NOT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUCAR 05847 050913Z

BE FORCED TO RETIRE. HE CONCLUDED BY STRESSING NEED FOR FIRM DISCIPLINE AND PROMISING THAT MINERS' ASSEMBLIES WILL BE INFORMED EVERY THREE MONTHS OF PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TO CORRECT THE PROBLEMS SURFACED IN HIS VISIT.

5. COMMENT: OUR GUESS IS THAT A STRIKE OR SOMETHING LIKE IT DID TAKE PLACE. IT IS UNUSUAL FOR CEAUSESCU TO BREAK HIS VACATION, BUT IT IS VERY MUCH IN KEEPING FOR HIM TO RUSH TO THE SCENE OF TROUBLE TO PUT OUT THE FIRE. INTERESTINGLY, WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS OF TWO SEPARATE MINISTRIES (METALLURGY AND FOREIGN TRADE) DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF JIU LABOR TROUBLE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMERCIAL ATTACHE AUGUST 4, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND AN INORDINATE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEMED TO BE READING SCINTEIA. WE ALSO GUESS, BASED ON NO HARD INFORMATION, THAT ROOT CAUSE IS WORKER REALIZATION THAT NEW SALARY AND PENSION LAWS WILL PRODUCE LITTLE REAL BENEFITS (AND EVEN CUTS IN PENSIONS) FOR THEM (CF BUCHAREST A-76 AND A74). WE WOULD NOT RULE OUT HOWEVER, SOME SPECIFIC DISPUTES WITH LOCAL MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS AS THE CATALYST AT ANY EVENT. SOME HEADS MAY ROLL.

BARNES

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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